(b) if so, whether Government have any scheme in this regard;

(c) whether any time schedule in this regard has been set by Government; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE): (a) The Central Electricity Authority had identified a hydro power potential of approximately 18,000 MW in Uttaranchal.

(b) and (c) The harnessing of this potential depends on commercial vaiability of these schemes, availability of environment, forest and other clearances, prospective buyers of generated power and identification of implementing agencies for the projects. 6 hydro electric projects with an installed capacity of 3,384 MW are expected to give benefit within the Tenth Plan period. It is tentatively estimated that around 4,000 MW could be set up during the Eleventh Plan in Uttaranchal. The Ministry of Power has sanctioned a scheme to prepare pre-feasibility reports for 162 hydro electric schemes in the country having an installed capacity of approximately 50,000 MW, out of which 39 schemes of 6,374 MW are in Uttaranchal.

(d) Does not arise.

Functioning of Panchayati Raj Bodies and Municipalities

†*391. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' :
SHRI LAJPAT RAI :

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a need for making the functioning of gram panchayats and municipalities more effective and strong for the balanced development of the country;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether it is also a fact that an amendment in the Constitution was made in the year 1992 in the direction of making the said institutions effective; and

(d) if so, the steps taken so far in order to make functioning of these institutions effective?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (d) The 73rd and the 74th Constitution (Amendment) Acts have been enacted to make the local bodies as institutions of self-government with enabling provision of devolution of powers to them.

As a nodal Ministry for the implementation of the 73rd Constitution (Amendment) Act, the Ministry of Rural Development monitors the implementation of various provisions of this Act. States have been addressed at the highest level from time to time urging them to expedite action in regard to devolution of funds, functions and functionaries to PRIs in respect of subjects included in the XIth Schedule of the Constitution and also to take steps for implementing other provisions of the Amendment Act. Similarly, meetings at the Ministerial level have been held for the purpose from time to time. Training of elected representatives is also supported by the Ministry towards capacity building of Panchayati Raj Institutions to make the functioning of these institutions more effective.

As the nodal Ministry for the implementation of the 74th Constitution (Amendment) Act, the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation have taken various steps to make functioning of Urban Local Bodies more effective. Article 280 (of the Constitution) has been amended to make it obligatory for the Central Finance Commission to suggest measures needed for augmenting the finance of Municipalities based on the recommendations of the State Finance Commissions.

Criteria for awarding Swatantrata Sangram Senani (S.S.S.) pension

*392. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of persons from Kerala who participated in the Punnapra-Vayalar struggle receiving S.S.S. pension;

(b) whether any applications stand rejected on the ground that the minimum imprisonment of six months before Independence was not completed;